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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA PM WANTS HELP GETTING OUT OF SOMALIA,
DEALING WITH ERITREA

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff for Reasons 1.4 B/D.

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles told A/S Frazer on April 17 that a lack of qualified TFG and AMISOM troops was putting in jeopardy his hopes of redeploying Ethiopian troops this summer. He downplayed reports that Somalia President Yusef was intent on removing Prime Minister Nur Adde, suggesting that Yusef had been frustrated with Nur Adde's naive reliance on unsavory advisors, but that the two had reconciled as witnessed by Yusef's recent disarming of elements of his personal guard that had been working to undermine Nur Adde in the Bakara Market district. Meles generally praised the efforts of SRSG Ould-Abdallah but agreed with A/S Frazer that Asmara-based radical elements were attempting to use the peace process to "get back in the game" and suggested that a slight delay in the process might be desirable as a means of allowing the situation to clarify itself. A/S Frazer described Department efforts to secure USG funding for the training of AMISOM troops from Burundi and Uganda, but told Meles not to expect a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia in the short term.

¶12. (C) SUMMARY CONTINUED. Meles said he would prefer termination of UNMEE to UN capitulation to the mission reconfiguration demands of Eritrea and advocated a tightening of remittance flows as a means of gaining more cooperation from Asmara. A/S Frazer replied that most Security Council members would not be receptive to sanctioning Eritrea and instead ask why the USG isn't insisting that Ethiopia get on with border demarcation pursuant to the boundary commission's decision. Meles said the Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute isn't about the border and could be resolved immediately upon receipt of Eritrea's assurance that there would be no war.
END SUMMARY.

¶13. (SBU) Assistant Secretary Frazer met with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on the margins of the April 16 Security Council's debate in New York on conflict mitigation in Africa. PM Meles was joined by Ethiopia's Deputy Permanent Representative Negash Botora. AF Poloffs and USUN DepPolCouns also attended.

Meles Wants Out Of Somalia, But On Favorable Terms

¶14. (C) Prime Minister Meles immediately asked about prospects for mobilizing resources for international community efforts in Somalia. A/S Frazer replied that the USG had provided \$14 million to train and equip Burundian troops in support of their recent deployment under AMISOM and was hoping to request additional supplemental funds to support additional deployments and sustain the current force. Both PM Meles and A/S Frazer expressed frustration with the level of Nigerian cooperation in meeting their AMISOM deployment pledge. A/S Frazer told PM Meles frankly the he should not expect a

United Nations Peacekeeping Operation to deploy to Somalia any time soon, adding that the Darfur experience has taught us all that the Security Council debate and deployment process is painfully slow.

¶5. (C) Asked about Ethiopia's timeline for leaving Somalia, PM Meles said he had not completely given up hope on a summer 2008 redeployment, although "prospects are not as good as they were." He suggested that the continued presence of Ethiopian forces in Mogadishu was giving the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) a false sense of security and that an Ethiopian withdrawal would, conversely, push the TFG to be more forthcoming in its reconciliation efforts. His said his vision of the future role of Ethiopia in Somalia has Ethiopian troops deploying and redeploying as needed by the African Union. He does not believe this vision can be realized until qualified troops from AU countries replace Ethiopian forces and "a few thousand" TFG forces are adequately trained. He sees trained TFG troops as crucial in that "those we have trained are acting more humanely."

¶6. (C) Commenting on an evident rift between Somalia President Abdullahi Yusef and Prime Minister Nur "Adde" Hussein Nur, Meles offered that a substantive difference between them over Nur's desire to include al Shabab and other questionable elements in the reconciliation process had been compounded by Hussein's naive tendency to surround himself with businessmen who "don't want peace because they find war more profitable." Meles gave Yusef credit for maturely resolving this situation by disarming members of his personal guard who had been undermining Nur in the Bakara Market district of Mogadishu, thereby sending an important message that rogue elements will not be tolerated.

¶7. (C) A/S Frazer replied that some of these characters have

gone to Nairobi and Asmara and are trying to use SRSG Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah's peace process "to get back in the game." Meles agreed, adding that the peace process is not well equipped to bridge gaps between oposition elements and former members of the Islamic Courts in Asmara, some of them within the same clan. He said Ould-Abdallah might be well-advised to allow a slight delay in the peace process to let the damage brought to the process by these elements sort itself out, especially in Asmara.

Meles Says Let UNMEE Go Rather Than Give In To Eritrea

¶8. (C) PM Meles criticized the Security Council for "blinking when push came to shove on UNMEE" by letting Eritrea effectively kick the mission out rather than implementing a Chapter VII intervention. He said Eritrean President Isaias Aferwerki had tested the UN all along and won at every stage with only a final stage remaining in which Asmara could get rewarded with a new UN office. He suggested, "It's better to recognize we have failed and avoid another failure" by simply terminating UNMEE if the Security Council isn't going to get tough with Eritrea as "the whole neighborhood watches." He said the only effective way to approach Eritrea would be to go after the flow of remittance money, which he said would get a response from Asmara within two to three months if coupled with other UNSC sanctions.

¶9. (C) A/S Frazer replied that the prime minister should understand that most Security Council members were not considering sanctions against Eritrea but rather asking why the USG is not pushing Ethiopia to demarcate the E/E border as called for by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission. Meles replied that border demarcation is a non-issue -- "(Isaias) is not worried about pieces of land, and neither am I." The issue, he said, is war and peace, compounded by a history in which "idiots in our party had tried to humiliate Eritrea" in the past only to make "his idiots go lower than our idiots." PM Meles said that if Eritrea "would assure us there will be no war, we will take the risk (of demarcating the border). But we can't call on our people to fight again

for the same bloody piece of land."

¶10. (U) A/S Frazer cleared on this message.
Khalilzad